

REMARKS

The Office Action dated January 14, 2008 has been received and carefully noted. The above amendments to the claims, and the following remarks, are submitted as a full and complete response thereto. Prior to entry of this amendment, claims 1-19 were pending in the application.

By this amendment, claims 6 and 7 have been cancelled, without prejudice or disclaimer, and claim 1 has been amended. No new matter has been added. Therefore, claims 1-5 and 8-19 are currently pending in the application.

Drawing Objections

The Office Action objected to the drawings. Specifically, the Office Action indicated that Figure 1-7 should be designated by a legend, such as "Prior Art." Applicants respectfully submit that the sheet containing drawings 1 to 7 has been replaced by the annexed Replacement Sheet, which recites in the page header the expression "Prior Art", as requested by the Examiner, and which complies with 37 C.F.R. § 1.121(d). The Replacement Sheet is submitted along with this Amendment. Applicants respectfully request that the objection to the drawings be withdrawn.

Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. 102

The Office Action rejected claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Iwanaga et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,457,161) (herein "Iwanaga"). As will

be discussed below, these claims recite subject matter which is neither disclosed, nor suggested, in the prior art.

Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 has been amended to include subject matter which has been indicated as being allowable. Furthermore, Applicants respectfully submit that the Office Action indicated that claim 7 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. As claim 7 depended upon claim 6, and as claim 6 depended upon claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that Iwanaga fails to disclose, or suggest, all the elements of claim 1, and that claim 1 recites allowable subject matter. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 2-3 depend upon claim 1. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 2-3 should be allowed for at least their dependence upon claim 1, and for the specific elements recited therein.

Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. 103

The Office Action rejected claim 4 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Iwanaga in view of Yagawara et al. (U.S. Patent No. 4,984,446) (herein “Yagawara”).

Claim 4 depends upon claim 1. As discussed above, Claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 7. Additionally, claim 4 should be allowed for at least its dependence upon claim 1, and for the specific elements recited therein.

The Office Action rejected claims 5, 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Iwanaga.

Claims 5, 8 and 9 depends upon claim 1. As discussed above, Claim 1 has been amended to include the allowable subject matter of claim 7. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that claims 5, 8, and 9 should be allowed for at least their dependence upon claim 1, and for the specific elements recited therein.

The Office Action rejected claim 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Iwanaga in view of Raisanen (U.S. Patent No. 6,786,076) (herein “Raisanen”). Applicants respectfully submit that claim 6 has been cancelled, and that said claim moots the rejection. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and withdrawal of the above rejections is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Office Action objected to claims 7 and 10-19 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but indicated that said claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants respectfully submit that claim 7 has been cancelled. Applicants further submit that claim 10 is already in independent form and recites allowable subject matter, and that claims 11-15 depend upon claim 10. Applicants further

submit that claims 16-19 depend upon claim 1 and claim 10, and that claim 1 recite allowable subject matter for the reasons discussed above.

Thus, Applicants have not amended claims 10-19, and Applicants respectfully submit that claims 10-19 recite allowable subject matter. If Applicants are in error, then Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner issue a new non-final Office Action clarifying the status of claims 10-19.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record but not applied by the Examiner has been carefully considered but is submitted to be less relevant than the references previously discussed.

If for any reason the Examiner determines that the application is not now in condition for allowance, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact, by telephone, the applicants' undersigned representative at the indicated telephone number to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this application.

In the event this paper is not being timely filed, the applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Any fees for such an extension together with any additional fees may be charged to Counsel's Deposit Account 50-2222.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Douglas H. Goldhush', written over a horizontal line.

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KMM:dlh

Enclosures: Replacement Sheet, Figures 1-7
Petition for Extension of Time
Check No. 018807